



*innovation in creating student success  
through cooperative services*



November 7, 2017

Chairman Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW,  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

I am writing in response to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Public Notice concerning changes to the E-Rate program. I want to thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program that provides critical discounts to assist The Greater Southern Tier BOCES and our component school districts to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

Greater Southern Tier BOCES supports the infrastructure needs of the school districts across our rural and financially strained region. The total E-Rate program expenditures for funding year 2016 and 2017 for our region were nearly \$2,000,000 in which 100% of the funds went directly to critical infrastructure upgrades.

The E-Rate program is succeeding in its mission. Any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential. The FCC must remain a good steward of the changes adopted 2014, allowing those changes to progress and play out as intended.

E-Rate played a critical role in the rapid and significant expansion of connectivity in schools, and the 2014 modernization was a much needed update to ensure more schools and libraries are connected to broadband. The E-Rate's investment in Category 2 Wi-Fi and internal connections funding is extremely valuable and could not be replaced by school, district or state funds.

I will ensure that all of the school districts in our region use 100% of the remaining E-Rate Category 2 allotment by 2020 for continued network infrastructure upgrades including, routing, switching, Wi-Fi expansion and internal structured cabling.

In closing, I reiterate our region's continued, strong support for and reliance upon the E-Rate program for being able to access and afford the high-speed connectivity that is so central to our students' learning. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Wallenbeck  
Greater Southern Tier BOCES  
Telecommunications Manager

**Greater Southern Tier Board of Cooperative Educational Services**

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Margaret Munson, Assistant Superintendent, Greater Southern Tier BOCES  
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